

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 201608Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9527

INFO AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 1072

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, HO

SUBJECT: F-86 AIRCRAFT TRANSFER

REF: STATE 059872

1. SINCE F-86 TRANSFER IS MOST SENSITIVE PROBLEM IN
CURRENT GOH-USG BILATERAL RELATIONS, EMBASSY WELCOMES
DECISION TO APPROVE TRANSFER OF F-86'S

2. THE EMBASSY HAS PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, WITH THE PROPOSED
SCENARIO, WHICH WE REGARD AS ENTAILING CONSIDERABLE RISK.
WE FRANKLY DO NOT KNOW HOW LOPEZ WOULD REACT TO INSISTENCE
ON OUR PART THAT THE GOH GIVE NOTIFICATION AND ASSURANCES
TO GOES, TO OUR INDICATING AT WHAT LEVEL AND BY WHAT
MEANS THIS SHOULD BE DONE, AND TO A REQUEST FOR SUBSE-
QUENT NOTIFICATION THAT THIS HAS BEEN DONE BEFORE THE
USG PROCEEDS TO IMPLEMENT ITS DECISION. WHILE IT IS NOT
ACCURATE TO STATE THAT THE GOH "HAS BEEN INTENSIVELY
PRESSURING USG FOR SEVERAL MONTHS TO APPROVE DEAL," WE
BELIEVE GOH IS STILL HIGHLY INTERESTED IN CONCLUDING IT.
CONSEQUENTLY, LOPEZ MIGHT JUST SWALLOW HIS PRIDE AND
RESENTMENT AND AGREE TO THE SCENARIO OUTLINED. ON THE
OTHER HAND, HE MIGHT VERY WELL REGARD THE SCENARIO AS
INCONSISTENT WITH THE CONCEPT OF A "MATURE PARTNERSHIP"
AND AS AN UNACCEPTABLE INTERFERENCE WITH THE GOH'S
SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO MANAGE ITS OWN FOREIGN RELATIONS.

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THE RESENTMENT CREATED BY ANY SUCH ATTEMPT TO DICTATE

HOW GOH SHOULD HANDLE A MATTER BEARING SO STRONGLY UPON ITS MOST SENSITIVE FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE (I.E., RELATIONS WITH EL SALVADOR) COULD WELL DEPRIVE US OF MUCH OF THE GOODWILL WHICH COULD REASONABLY BE EXPECTED TO RESULT FROM OUR APPROVAL OF THE SALE, HOWEVER BELATEDLY. AS STATED IN TEGUCIGALPA 0954, WE THINK IT UNLIKELY GOH WOULD AGREE TO THE PROPOSED SCENARIO FOR NOTIFICATION AND THIS CONTINUES TO BE OUR BEST ESTIMATE OF THE SITUATION. IF, THEREFOR, THE AMBASSADOR'S DEMARCHE IN ACCORD WITH THE PROPOSED SCENARIO WERE TO BE REBUFFED, HE, THE EMBASSY AND THE USG IN GENERAL WOULD BE PLACED IN A MOST DIFFICULT POSITION AND WOULD FACE A GRAVE DECISION IN REGARD TO THE TRANSFER OF THE F-86'S. A REFUSAL TO LICENSE THE TRANSFER UPON THESE CIRCUMSTANCES COULD AFFECT A BROAD GAMUT OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIPS.

3. WHILE USG HAD NO ROLE IN SALE OF ISRAELI JETS TO GOES, THE EMBASSY IS UNAWARE OF ANY PRIOR NOTIFICATION OR ASSURANCES BY GOES TO GOH ON THAT OCCASION. THESE ASSURANCES WERE GIVEN BY THE GOES ONLY AFTER NEW OF THE SALE HAD BROKEN IN THE PRESS. HOWEVER, THE ASSURANCES SUGGESTED ARE CERTAINLY DESIRABLE AND APPROPRIATE AND SHOULD INDEED BE ENCOURAGED, BUT, IN OUR VIEW, SHOULD NOT BE IMPOSED AS A CONDITION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE US DECISION.

4. THE EMBASSY, THEREFORE, RECOMMENDS THAT THE AMBASSADOR BE INSTRUCTED TO INFORM LOPEZ OF US READINESS TO LICENSE THE TRANSFER OF THE AIRCRAFT AND AT THE SAME TIME TO SUGGEST REPEAT SUGGEST THAT GOES BE GIVEN PROMPTLY APPROPRIATE ASSURANCES REGARDING THE MOTIVE OF THE PURCHASE. AMBASSADOR WOULD, OF COURSE, ALSO POINT OUT THAT IT IS INCUMBENT ON THE USG TO INFORM THE GOES OF THE APPROVAL OF THE TRANSFER AND THAT, IN THE VIEW OF THE USG, SUCH NOTIFICATION FROM THE GOH TO THE GOES WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE TO AMELIORATE POSSIBLE GOES CONCERN ABOUT GOH INTENTIONS. IN OUR VIEW, GOES SHOULD BE INFORMED OF PROPOSED US ACTION SHORTLY AFTER THE AMBASSADOR'S CONVERSATION WITH LOPEZ. I AM CONFIDENT THAT ON THIS BASIS LOPEZ WOULD AGREE TO NOTIFY PRESEDENT MOLINA.

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5. FRIDAY, MARCH 21, IS HONDURAN AIR FORCE DAY. I WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO CONVEY NOTICE OF OUR APPROVAL OF THE TRANSFER TO THE GOH ON THIS VERY APPROPRIATE OCCASION.

SANCHEZ

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